I telephoned Mr. Kenyon Painter, in Phoenix, Arizona, phone: 602 947 3389. He told me he knew me. He stated that he still collected coins and had a nice library but that he sold his Pioneer gold collection because he had too much money invested in it.

He told me that the gold ingot from Coloma was purchased by him in Denver at the office of Dan Brown. He said that Dan Brown had turned it down the piece and that he then bought it for about $100.00 over its gold value. He said there were two pieces found at the same time; that it was bought from a German and that a Japanese man was also involved and that it was bought somewhere around ten years ago. He said he would write me a letter that he thought it was genuine.

He told me he had a crucible which was given to him by John Ford. He said I could have it as he had no use for it.

I then asked him what he knew about the US Assay Office $20 pieces of 1853 and he said that in his opinion there was no press in America at the time able to produce as bright a piece as the group which were under controversy. He told me that Ford had offered the group to him at one time but that he turned them down. He indicated that in his opinion they were bad but that he did not want to get sued and was not going to say much.

He then told me that John Ford had bought the Assay Office equipment, including dies and punches, which had belonged to J.J.Ott, assayer, who operated in Nevada City, Nevada County, California. He said these were bought from the family of Mr. Ott about 1957. He said that he had been to Nevada City and that the museum curator, across the street from the family, was fully familiar with many of

the details. He told me there was more than one Ott bar. He said that Kosoff, Carr, and a number of others were fully familiar with the fact that Ford had bought the Assay Office equipment and that many of the coins were false.

I asked him what he thought of the Blake circular pieces and he told me he thought they were bad and that he had a Blake silver bar. He then asked me whether I was familiar with a $50 round U.S.Assay Office piece and I asked him whether this was the onethat was made from the modification of the $20 die. He indicated that the round $50 was bad. He then went on to say that all of these various discoveries to have been found by Ford was an impossibility.

He asked me if I knew Franklin was a metallurgist and I said that I had been told so. I asked him if had seen Franklin and He said that he would not have anything more to do with him and had not seen him in quite a while. He said now you can see the reason why I got out of Pioneer gold.

He told me further that the Templeton Reid piece pictured in black and white in the Western Brand book was taken of a gold one which was not genuine. I asked him where they came from and he told me that Wallowa had gotten the Nagy material and that Ford,Werkin and Stack all had participated in the handling of it.

He then told me that there was a book written by Dr.Russell H. Fentz, of Detroit, on Pioneer gold, and I said I had never heard of it. He said this is the man who made the false $16 ingots. I asked him if the doctor was a dentist and he said yes. I asked to

borrow the book written by Dr. Rentz and he told me he did not lend books from his library but that he would show it to me if I visited him. I told him I might visit him but I would talk to him first, after I digested all of the material which we discussed.

I suggested that in some way he contact the museum curator in Nevada City in order to obtain the information he had on Ott.

I asked him who Judge Allen was as he was supposed to have a crucible in which the Coloma ingot was cast. He said he did not know.

He said there was a group of Massachusetts Company and California Company pieces which were bad.

He told me that Mr. Murrell had sold his Pioneer gold to Mr. Clifford.

He also told me that he sold his Pioneer collection to Kosoff and that Kosoff had resold it.

I thanked him for being so open with me and assured him that my interest was for research purposes.

ERIC P. NEWMAN

EPN/atb

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC EDUCATION SOCIETY

6453 Cecil Avenue St. Louis 5, Missouri

July 24, 1968

Mr. Kenyon V. Painter
P.O.Box 665
Phoenix, Arizona

Dear Kenyon:

It was delightful to meet you and your family and to spend such a pleasant few hours at your lovely home. Your library was unusually impressive and you should be very proud of having assembled such a fine collection.

Under separate cover I am sending you my monograph entitled "The Secret of the Good Samaritan Shilling". It was my recollection that you did not have this item in your library.

Discussing Pioneer Gold coinage with you was stimulating and extremely helpful. I will write you further with respect to this matter in due course. In the meantime there is enclosed a photocopy of the Garland-Ryan Arbitration Decision which you indicated you would like to see.

The two crucibles which were in the assaying office of J. J. Ott and which were given to you by Ford and Franklin are also much appreciated.

We certainly should have known each other long ago so that we could talk over problems of mutual interest; however, we hope that the pleasant beginnings are a prelude of things to come.

Again, many thanks for your hospitality.

Sincerely yours,

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC
EDUCATION SOCIETY

EPN:eth

A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION FOR EDUCATION
THROUGH RESEARCH AND EXHIBITION
OF COINS, CURRENCY AND HISTORIC OBJECTS

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
Washington, D.C. 20560
U.S.A.

July 3, 1974

Mr. Eric P. Newman
Numismatic Education Society
6450 Cecil Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63105

Dear Mr. Newman:

This is in response to your recent letter which asks if the Smithsonian inventory of the Lilly Collection, a copy of which was offered to you, contains provenances and other background information from the Kosoff appraisal of the western American portion of the Collection.

As explained to you in my April 9, 1974 letter, the Smithsonian views the Kosoff-Schulman appraisal as proprietary information subject to the sole control of the Lilly Estate. The Smithsonian has not reproduced this appraisal for its records nor had it any right to do so. Considering these legalities, I am sure you understand why the answer to your specific question must be "no."

The Kosoff-Schulman appraisal is in the possession of the Lilly Estate. I can only suggest once again that questions on the contents of this document should be referred to Mr. Paul Rawley, the Estate's executor.

Very truly yours,

Marie C. Malaro
Assistant General Counsel

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC EDUCATION SOCIETY

6450 Cecil Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63105

REGISTERED MAIL

August 8, 1984

ANACS
818 North Cascade Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Gentlemen:

The gold ingot submitted to us for opinion is your E-5752-E. On one side it has a panel bearing the four line legend "United States Assay Office of Gold San Francisco California 1853" and the large incuse numbers reading 2 - 17 - 53. On the other side is a panel bearing the legend "A. Humbert U. S. Assayer" and large incuse numbers reading "998". The weight is 28.5274 grams and the specific gravity is 19.324888. The submitted piece has no value or weight stamped upon it. Its two faces have a gently convex top and bottom and its sides are slightly concave. It is about 21 mm. from top to bottom and about 35 mm. from side to side. Its general thickness is about 2 mm. It has no abrasions or wear from use or handling. It is bright and of uniform golden color. We assume the 2 - 17 - 53 is intended to be February 17, 1853 and we assume 998 is intended to be fineness. There is no die break evident in the four line panel. We have examined this style of ingot in the Bank of California collection and are aware of auction catalogs and other written material listing similar and related items. We have studied and given testimony on 1853 $20 U. S. Assay gold coins.

The submission of this ingot to us for an opinion has made it desirable to review past and study recent research on the subject of similar U. S. Assay Office private gold items and related matters.

We have already on file at ANACS a detailed opinion dated October 28, 1978 that an 1853 U. S. Assay Office $20 gold coin designated as E-5759-B is a forgery. A copy of that opinion is attached to this letter. The submitted ingot contains the same panel design and four line legend as that coin has as part of its reverse design.

In 1981 there was published a long researched book on U. S. private gold pieces written by Donald H. Kagin. It does not seem to clear up matters involving the above $20 coin and the submitted ingot, but certain material in that book will be commented upon in connection with our conclusion.

The four line 1853 U. S. Assay Office panel legend is used alone on the U. S. Assay discs Kagin #20, 21(c), 21(d) and 21(e) illustrated on pages 274 and 275 and on ingot #23 on page 276. The A. Humbert two line panel legend is used on the U. S. Assay ingot #23 on page 276 and also used double struck on Argenti #1 on page 278. Incuse numbers of the size used on the submitted ingot are found in various combinations on Kagin #21, 21(a), 21(b), 21(c), 21(d), 21(e), 23 and 24 on pages 274, 275, 331 and 332.

It is of great interest that a group of pieces listed in the Kagin book were entirely unknown to Edgar H. Adams who researched extensively and wrote his publication on the subject in 1912-1913. That group were also unknown before 1958. The Kagin book stated on Page 274 without source or any detail that some of these pieces "were found in Arizona". Some of the group of pieces were listed in the 1963 Red Book but were eliminated the next year and thereafter. One piece was even pictured in the Encyclopaedia Britannica and thereafter removed. Taxay listed some items and many auction sale catalogs have done so.

Kagin in describing the regular Massachusetts and California Company items stated on page 292, "Several spurious concoctions exist." This was supplemented on page 342 under modern strikings, patterns and trials and referring to the same series with the explanation, "The following two types are 20th Century Concoctions.".

Kagin has several comments about Stephen K. Nagy (1883-1958) of Philadelphia, who was member #763 of the A.N.A. from 1905 to 1916. Nagy is not included in Kagin's index, but those comments we have found concerning Nagy are included in this letter.

Nagy is stated by Kagin on page 237 to have obtained "several pairs of private dies of Massachusetts and California companies and created a number of fantasy coins to sell to collectors" Since "companies" is plural and not capitalized and there is an "and" instead of &, the expression was apparently intended to have a broader meaning than a reference to Massachusetts & California Co. only. This is supported (a) on page 326 by Kagin's statement that Nagy probably had used an 1851 panel punch to make the multistruck U. S. Assay Office silver bar described as item #6; (b) on pages 376-377 that the silver, copper and lead uniface reverse strikes of the 1852 U. S. Assay Office $20 size were "Made by Steven Nagy of Philadelphia circa 1908-12"; and (c) on page 378 that Nagy purchased Templeton Reid dies from John Haseltine and used them to make impressions.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above is that Stephen K. Nagy had obtained and used various private gold dies and at least one punch to make unauthorized twentieth century fantasies. We learned about 20 years ago that certain private gold dies which were at the U. S Mint about 1912 were missing, that when Nagy died in 1958 he had possession of a large quantity of items formerly belonging to the U. S. Mint and that these changed ownership from the Nagy estate to others with no publicity.

On page 382 Kagin has a heading, CONTEMPORARY COUNTERFEITS AND FILING OF PRIVATE GOLD COINS. By contemporary he means counterfeits made to circulate along with genuine ones. He mentions no such counterfeits of private gold coins there and only alludes to filed or altered pieces and counterfeits of U. S. standard or national gold pieces.

Kagin also comments under CONTEMPORARY COUNTERFEITS AND REPLICAS on page 383:

"There has been no comprehensive study of which private gold coins have been counterfeited recently. With the help of the American Numismatic Association Certification Service, however, I have attempted to list at least some of the known pieces which have been counterfeited. It is suggested that anyone who doubts the genuineness of a private gold coin send it to the ANACS in Colorado Springs, Colorado."

He then lists only 3 Bechtler counterfeit items, followed by MODERN COUNTERFEITS of private gold on page 384 with the comment "Most are cast" but gives little distinguishing detail except that they are made of a metal other than gold in some instances.

The submitted ingot is not included in Kagin's book because on page 248 he specifically excluded bars or ingots which have no values marked upon them.

This letter of ours should not be construed to be a criticism of certain portions of Kagin's book as we merely are pointing out certain missing detail. This subject is very complex and controversial and Kagin has added quantities of important data. We wrote Kagin during the time he was preparing the manuscript for his book to include facts from the extended arbitration hearing and written arbitrators' decision in favor of Garland in the case of Garland vs. Ryan conducted by the Professional Numismatists Guild involving an 1853 $20 U. S. Assay Office coin and the judgment in favor of Garland by the Cook County, Illinois Circuit Court thereafter. Kagin did not include any such material or request any such material from us.

The evidence and findings of fact in that arbitration have not been made public and should be at least filed with ANACS, since a portion has recently been sold at a Kolbe numismatic literature public auction and other portions have lost their unjustified secrecy. All the material still exists in the hands of one or more of the three arbitrators.

The conclusions on the submitted piece are now much easier to justify and explain. It is our opinion that an assortment of dies, lettered punches, hubs, and a large set of various sized letter and figure punches were obtained by Nagy from the U. S. Mint. He made some fantasy items for collectors which were known before 1958. After his death these punches, hubs and dies were obtained by others who used them and transfer hubs from them to make a large group of interrelated and some unrelated fantasy private gold pieces. The alleged secretive finding of many of these pieces in Arizona is a fiction in our opinion. The workmanship and metallurgy of this modern crop of fantasies is superb; the conceptual planning is truly a great imaginative achievement; and the effect on the science and hobby of numismatics is a disgusting tragedy.

Whatever opinions in the past ANACS has given to those submitting similar pieces, we do not know, as our opinion may have been a minority view or considered an insufficiently convincing view.

In our opinion, the submitted ingot was made circa 1960 by using at least one original 1853 panel punch or hub formerly at the U. S. Mint or a transfer punch or hub made from an 1853 die formerly at the U. S. Mint and containing that design. Its incuse numbers were added from number punches formerly owned by the U. S. Mint. The Humbert punch or hub had the same source. The gold from early San Francisco Mint U. S. coinage was probably further refined and used for the ingots so that trace elements are normal, but no content analysis has been made.

The submitted ingot is clearly a circa 1960 forgery in our opinion.

We have wondered for a long time when a piece of this type would be submitted for an opinion and we are glad to be able to see that the Kagin book on the subject refers authenticity of such pieces to ANACS. If any of you at ANACS feel our opinion should be clarified, modified or supplemented, we welcome your suggestions and will try to make it more meaningful. We have much more data which could be presented if the need arises. We request a picture of each face of the ingot to be attached to this letter and another set or so for our file.

We return the ingot herewith.

We hope we have been helpful even if this is the longest consultant's opinion you have received or will probably ever receive.

Very truly yours,

Eric P. Newman, President

jah

Encl.

from my Sept 1998 comment on the Hodder article presented to the Governors

Guide Book of United States Coins in various editions prior that date. (p.64)

What is the "Franklin Hoard"? It is mentioned several times. The Bowers' reference is not clear about when, how or where it was discovered. How could it have been found in "various places" as stated in Hodder's article? On pages 92-93, he states that hoards are not listed by commercial interests for economic reasons. Does this not make Ford's accounts of the hoards invalid? In the Bowers' account of the Franklin Hoard, Ford said that he had an agreement with Franklin not to tell where the bars came from, or to whom they were sold. (Bowers page 271).

This article is woefully incomplete without any statements or corroborating evidence from John Ford or Paul Franklin. They are both mentioned repeatedly in the article as being prime source of information about the bars in question. I assume they are both living and able to supply information. Ford gave a talk about some of these things at the 1998 ANA convention in Portland. Statements from these sources might be of importance to verify Hodder's remarks. References should be made to the actual appearance (when, where, quotations, etc.) of the Ford and Franklin advertisements, etc. alluded to on page 11.

In the Hodder listing of discoveries since the time of Adams, et al, on page 23, he describes a unique $16 Moffat and Company gold bar. Buttrey also mentions that same bar on page 105 in his article and calls it a counterfeit. The piece was published in *The Numismatist* in 1940 in an article by Stacks, where it is determined to be a modern imitation. Later, in another *Numismatist* article, (March 1964) the same unique bar is called genuine by John Ford, and a story is told about two cast copies of the piece that appeared on the market. The unique original, it is said, was authenticated by Ford, and sold to a Chicago doctor.

In this article, TN p.312, which was authored by John Ford and Don Taxay, there is a pertinent statement about false western bars that was omitted from the Hodder article: *"The manufacture and distribution of false and fantasy gold ingots is encouraged, in our opinion, by the arbitrary and punitive restrictions placed upon the series by the Office of Domestic Gold and Silver Operations. The fact that "ingot transactions" must, of necessity, involve a certain amount of subterfuge, can only assist the maker of, and dealer in, counterfeit numismatic ingots."*

In footnote (1x) p.108-109, several Treasury License Numbers are cited covering gold bars that were submitted in 1966 to the Treasury for examination. The names of people who were issued those Licenses should be given, and it should be told if those bars were part of the so-called Franklin Hoard. It

IMPORTANCE OF THE **BLAKE & AGNELL** MISSPELLING

In a July 2000 Internet communication Robert Leonard included comments on the misspelling of the pioneer gold assaying partnership of Blake and Agrell as "Blake & Agnell". This error was previously pointed out in Donald H. Kagin's Private Gold Coins of the United States (1981), p. 151 and in his 1979 doctoral dissertation, p. 212. Walter Breen's Complete Encyclopedia (1988), p. 651, also includes a discussion of the mistake. The spelling error was not mentioned in the catalogs of Don Taxay, Wayte Raymond or Yeoman-Bressett, each of which included pieces with the "BLAKE & AGNELL" misspelling.

An analysis of available facts and previous written comments seems desirable since Leonard specifically challenges the authenticity of an 1855 $23.30 "BLAKE & AGNELL" gold bar.

During the 1996-1999 period Theodore V. Buttery undertook presentations challenging the authenticity of an unspecified group of pioneer gold pieces appearing after 1950 and Michael Hodder's presentations during the 1998-2000 period asserted a contrary position. Neither mentioned the misspelling of "BLAKE & AGNELL" on pioneer gold pieces although each includes references to the Blake & Agnell name.

The spelling error "Blake & Agnell" in printed text form first appeared in 1912 on page 108 of the five part studies of U.S. pioneer gold pieces written by Edgar H. Adams for the American Journal of Numismatics which studies have been reprinted. There was only one use of the name Agnell by him and no mention of the name Agrell. Edgar H. Adams in his publication did include the 1856 $20 circular trial coinage in copper and

its condition described as "Fleur du Coin" or proof (Lot # 1008). This piece was one of the same variety and in the same proof-like condition (generally known as a "Franklin hoard" piece) as one which was the subject of a PNG (Professional Numismatic Guild) arbitration award in 1968 in which it was determined unanimously[1] that the coin was not a proof and its sale as a proof was a misstatement on the invoice justifying the return of the purchase price to the buyer by the seller. All of the 1853 $20 U.S.A.O.G. gold pieces of the same variety and proof-like condition have been stated to be counterfeit (fake) by Richard S. Montgomery (Rick Montgomery) on page 289 of the portion written by him in the recent book, The Official Guide to Coin Grading and Counterfeit Detection (New York City, 1997). Montgomery is referred to in that book as president of PCGS (Professional Coin Grading Service) and "considered by many to be the number one counterfeit coin detection expert in the world." The published ANACS (American Numismatic Association Certification Service) opinion (The Numismatist, Feb. 1994, p. 290) has taken the same position. (See also Coin World, July 5, 1999, p. 72)

It can be observed that the close association of the G BLAKE ASSAYER ingot dated 1854 and the 1853 USAOG $20 piece in proof-like condition side by side in the same Swiss auction catalog, being the only pieces of U.S. pioneer gold offered there, might well have had some prior mutual relationship or source. Thus one piece was withdrawn from that auction as a fake and the other piece was not sold for some reason. That other piece was from the same dies and in identical condition as a coin later declared to be a fake by reliable authenticators.

[1] Two arbitrators (one appointed by Garland and one by mutual consent of the arbitrators for each party to the dispute) believed the 1853 $20 USAOG piece was a forgery, but the third arbitrator (appointed by Ryan) did not agree. The desire to have a unanimous decision rather than a 2-1 decision was selected and thus the difference of opinion among arbitrators in the final opinion was avoided.

On March 1-2, 1962, the same year as the Swiss auction above mentioned, both Crowther and Grover were also involved in the placement and "sale"[2] of a false St. Patrick's farthing struck in gold as Lot # 365 in an auction by Wallis & Wallis at Lewes, Sussex, England at which the farthing was alleged to have brought £ 500, the highest priced coin in the history of that auctioneer. It was said to have been bought by Spinks for whom Crowther worked. A request to see the underbidder's name and bid was refused by the auctioneer. That request was made to try to determine whether a wash sale in a rural English auction had occurred to create a false provenance and an artificial price. Spinks sold the coin to Emery May Norweb. After her death it was withdrawn from the Bowers & Merena Auction of her collection held March 24-25, 1988, (Lot 2386) and donated to the American Numismatic Society for study.

The year 1962 was a busy one for the sale of forged American related pieces in European auctions. The fact that they were not auctioned in the United States is strange. Each piece was a major American rarity, if genuine. The G. BLAKE ASSAYER piece and the St. Patrick farthing in gold were previously unknown by the public. None of the pieces had a named provenance or consignor. Two were side by side in the same auction. The same numismatic professionals were involved in the submission of the pieces in two separate and unrelated auction sales about 6 months apart. Each piece was stated to be a forgery or fake at the time of the sale or thereafter, at least one and perhaps two being withdrawn from the original auction sale as false; the details of the sale, if any, of another being refused at the time of the original auction but being withdrawn from a 1988 auction sale; and the third being an identical companion to a piece subsequently declared to be a forgery.

In American Coin Treasures and Hoards (1997) by Q. David Bowers on p. 271 and in other oral and written statements it is said that John J. Ford, Jr. explained that "Franklin found the material and I researched and sold it." Ford continued to elaborate that "Franklin was not to tell me where he obtained his material***." This seems to leave credit for the discovery of the "unearthed" items in a somewhat contradictory status.

It can also be observed that the John J. Ford, Jr. flyer copyrighted in 1957 and soliciting correspondence and rubbings of western American numismatic related items were to be sent to his home but does not mention Franklin's name or address. Similarly the July 1959 advertisement in The Numismatist by New Netherlands Coin Co. Inc. (the employer of John J. Ford, Jr.) suggests to readers who have Western Numismatic Americana that "it will pay you to deal direct" and gives only the New York City address of New Netherlands for "offers, appraisals, correspondence, transactions". This and other advertising do not mention Franklin's name. No Franklin flyer or advertising is known.

The foregoing seems to cast doubt on the statement that Franklin "found" the material and turned it over to Ford for sale.

Both of the advertisements above mentioned prominently feature an illustration of both faces of the 1855 $ 25 rectangular gold bar with the BLAKE & AGNELL misspelling. This type of piece will be commented upon subsequently.

GUIDE BOOK OF UNITED STATES COINS

THE RED BOOK

In the Yeoman-Bressett 9th edition of the "Red Book" for the year 1956 the first "BLAKE & AGNELL" bar or ingot is included (p. 212) and consists of a piece dated

1855 with a $23.30 value struck into it by punch. This listing remained unchanged until the 13th edition for the year 1960 when three new pieces and some historical data were added. The new pieces were (a) an 1855 rectangular bar or ingot with the misspelled BLAKE & AGNELL name and with the denomination $25.00 die struck on the obverse; (b) an 1855 dated $20 size circular piece having a screw press on the obverse and with concentric circles and BLAKE & CO. upon the reverse and with 20 as a denomination punched in on both obverse and reverse; and (c) a mention of the 1856 $20 circular trial piece in non-precious metal with BLAKE & CO on the coronet of the obverse. This situation remained virtually unchanged until the 19th edition for the year 1966 when all BLAKE & AGNELL as well as BLAKE & CO. pieces were entirely eliminated. Those eliminated pieces have never been reinstated in the Yeoman-Bressett catalog.

In 1994 and thereafter the Yeoman-Bressett catalog has illustrated and described examples of BLAKE & CO and other assay bars salvaged from the wreck of *S.S. Central America*.

THE TAXAY BOOK

During his five years of preparation of The Comprehensive Catalog and Encyclopedia of United States Coins (Omaha 1970) Don Taxay was in continual contact with U. S. pioneer gold research and researchers. He illustrated as item 99 on plate 105 of his book an 1855 $25 rectangular "BLAKE & AGNELL" bar but in the text description (p. 358) misdates it as 1856. He was either unaware of or rejected the inclusion of an 1855 $50 "BLAKE & AGNELL" rectangular gold bar struck with circular dies or he would have described and illustrated it as he did the 1855 $20 circular "BLAKE & CO."

piece using an identical obverse die. He was also unaware of the correct spelling of the partnership name of Blake & Agrell as he uses the name "Agnell" three times (p. 352) showing that he believed it was the correct spelling of the name. His unawareness of or rejection of the 1855 "Blake & Agnell" $50 piece is unusual in that it had the same provenance (Ford, Bank of California) as the 1855 $25 rectangular "BLAKE & AGNELL" bar and one of the 1855 $20 circular BLAKE & CO. pieces. (See also Breen, p. 651, for ownership confirmation).

Taxay also stated that there were bars made in 1854 under the name G BLAKE ASSAYER (p. 352), but did not describe or illustrate any. He apparently was aware of the 1962 events as to such a bar.

Taxay also wrote that he knew of a number of 1856 dated "Blake & Co." assay bars (p. 352) but he did not give any source of his information or describe or illustrate any of them, possibly because these items were not coins and therefore not within the scope of his book. Whether they were of the type found in the salvage from S.S. Central America in the 1980s and 1990s or otherwise does not seem determinable from his work.

THE KAGIN BOOK

Kagin in his Private Gold Coins publication of 1981 (p. 171), and in his 1979 doctoral dissertation (p. 212) appears to be the first to mention the misspelling of the name Agrell as "Agnell". Kagin indicates the mistake of one letter on the dies might not have been practical to correct, "especially when they were a large company known by most citizens in Sacramento." He shows two dies with the "BLAKE & AGNELL" name misspelled, one being the round die and the other being the rectangular die. No pieces

indicates that there was collector interest in "the letter and numeral punches used for making bars and ingots, bar and ingot moulds."

In The Numismatist for July 1959 there is an advertisement of New Netherlands Coin Co. Inc., at which John J. Ford, Jr. then was working, stating "we have scrutinized pioneer patterns and trials, unofficial coin dies, assay ingot punches *** and even bar and ingot moulds." Below that is an excerpt which stated: " It will pay you to contact us if you have any of the following items or know where to locate them! *** Any ephemera connected with the Numismatic West; from Assayer's letter punches to ***."

One might conclude from such publicity that Gold Rush period letter punches, numeral punches, moulds for bars and ingots, etc. might be available for purchase in the 1950s. Such letter and numeral punches of many sizes and styles were used for marking or forming metal and other products of general use and were not specifically prepared for making bars and ingots. As to information concerning the chemical content of ores and other material there was always substantial data readily available to everyone. The protests against the academics may seem unjustified.

BLAKE RELATED ITEMS IN THE JOSIAH K LILLY-SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION HOLDINGS

After Josiah K. Lilly died his enormous collection of gold coins was inventoried and appraised by Abe Kosoff and Hans M.F. Schulman in September 1967. An Act of Congress was passed providing that the Lilly Estate would receive $5,500,000 as an estate tax credit if his gold collection were donated to the Smithsonian Institution. The donation was made. There are four Blake related items described, the first two being

have had available in California a finely adjustable metal lathe during the 1855 period even though an "engine turning" machine was definitely not available.

(H) As to a Blake & Agnell unique $25 rectangular ingot dated 1855 (Item-3) it is stated, " It is considered likely that other examples of this variety will turn up." This forecast is irresponsible and has a tendency to create suspicion.

(I) No discovery or source information or provenance of any item is furnished in spite of showing an extensive familiarity with pioneer gold history.

(J) It was suggested that the BLAKE & AGNELL strip of three separate horizontal stampings was rejected for being underweight and therefore was kept as a souvenir by the assayers.

(K) The BLAKE & CO assay ingot with the name in an arc is not further described because it was not examined, but it seems to have the characteristics of genuine BLAKE & CO assay ingots subsequently salvaged from *SS Central America.*

The opinion of Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society as to the Blake and Agnell gold strip dated 1855 with three identical separate horizontal stampings was sent to the Norwebs on June 18, 1969 and contained the following major observations:

(AA) That the souvenir status of the strip because it was slightly underweight to be cut into three $25 size pieces was unjustified because it could easily be remelted or two pieces of full weight could easily have been cut from it and the remaining underweight portion remelted. An assayer keeping a souvenir of that value, easily reproducible, and with a misspelled name on it seems to be ~~pure hype~~.

(BB) No information as to the discovery, source or provenance of the strip was furnished in the detailed report or otherwise.

(CC) It was pointed out that in the July 1959 advertisement of New Netherlands Coin Co., Inc., in The Numismatist that the advertisers had the " good fortune to devise a system of unearthing numerous unique pieces not previously known". Forecasting such a future not only was unreliable insight but forecasting the finding of unique pieces seems even worse.

(DD) The same advertisement stated that "we have handled the most fabulous items imaginable". The word "fabulous" may be an advertising puff, but fabulous fundamentally means unreal.

(EE) It was pointed out that Paul Franklin and John J. Ford, Jr. for many years had a business relationship, were close friends, and lived in communities close to each other in Long Island, NY.

(FF) It was pointed out that Paul Franklin was the source of the previously unknown Parsons bar from Colorado and the source of the previously unknown Blake & Co. gold pieces struck with circular dies.

(GG) It was pointed out that Paul Franklin testified at the Garland vs. Ryan arbitration hearings that he was a skilled machinist and gave full technical details of his knowledge of electrotyping.

(HH) It was pointed out that Paul Franklin refused to testify at the Garland vs. Ryan arbitration hearings as to the source of the 1853 $20 U.S.A.O.G. gold coins, one of which was the coin under consideration at those hearings.

(II) It was pointed out that John J. Ford, Jr. had told Eric P. Newman that Paul Franklin was the finest metallurgist that Ford had ever known.

There may be other unpublished opinions which will come to light.

S.S. CENTRAL AMERICA

Publicity about the immense amount of assay ingots, bars and coins salvaged from the *S.S. Central America* has not mentioned any item with the name BLAKE & AGNELL or BLAKE & AGRELL or AGNELL or AGRELL. The Sotheby Auction of 1999-2000 included only about 8 % of the find and that portion has 15 assay ingots of BLAKE & CO. The Sotheby catalog (pp. 84-87) mentions the name John Agrell in the historical section. As to the remaining 92% of the treasure another 19 more BLAKE & CO. assay ingots were found. There were no coins found with the name BLAKE on them. All assay ingots found contain no other name but BLAKE & CO. No salvaged pieces show any identical letter or numeral punches identical to any of the coins or bars containing the name BLAKE which were publicized before the *Central America* recovery. There is no challenge whatever as to the authenticity of the *Central America* pieces. There was no known opportunity to salt the wreck. The Yeoman-Bressett Red Book has included the listing of *S.S. Central America* pieces since 1994.

Naturally there must have been other genuine BLAKE & CO assay ingots which "missed the boat".

situation seems to clarify and suggest the later date in each situation as the date of the creation of each of the fantasy pieces.

GENUINE FAKES OF BLAKE & CO.

The Chrysler Corporation in 1969 needed a gimmick to promote the introduction of its 1970 Golden Duster Valiant automobile. It undertook to copy for that purpose an 1855 $20 Blake & Co. circular California pioneer gold piece which was the same size as the United States $20 gold coinage. Chrysler had many, many thousands of copies reproduced in a brassy color using a mixture of non-precious metals. These were given away and avidly enjoyed by the public. (See the listing in Larry Spanbauer, Colonial Copies, Private Mint Replicas, Modern Counterfeits of United States Coins, Oshkosh 1975, p.4)

Thereafter inquiries concerning their value as rarities were enormous and the tales created by members of the public to support their genuineness and gold content defy the imagination. Numismatic columnists and others continually have had to disappoint the many inquirers over the years since then. In 1976 there was even litigation in Michigan over the ownership of one and the case was dropped when a jeweler determined that the coin had no gold content.

Some numismatists enjoyed the situation immensely because they felt hat a fake of a fake was truly comical.

a conclusion

constitute a solid proof of plagiarism or other improprieties as well as unchecked reliance upon previously published information.

If there is one BLAKE & AGNELL piece which is a forgery the spreading of a virus is involved. All of the pieces connected to such a forgery by die linkage, interlocked letter or number punches, incorrect spelling of AGRELL's name or other associating factors would be forgeries. This would include some pieces with the BLAKE & CO name. Any person creating such imaginative forgeries would not likely have limited such production to Blake related pieces, much to that person's discredit.

The scope of the data assembled for this research project and covered by it is limited to items which include the name BLAKE plus some other issues or issuers, associated or related to BLAKE matters. There have been omitted many pioneer gold observations which have a more distant association or a need for an independent review.

If there are any statements in the foregoing presentation which are inaccurate or ambiguous, or can be supplemented, clarified or improved upon, the writer welcomes suggestions. If the subject should be enlarged to include other pieces of pioneer gold the material for such items can be assembled individually or as a team effort. The subject matter is intriguing.

It is difficult to show that an existing item or items did not exist at the time they would have had to exist in order to be genuine. The proof of a negative is always a challenge. It is hoped that such a challenge has been reasonably presented.

Thanks are due to many who have over a long period of time shared their information with the writer and it is hoped that they and others will continue to do so.

Those who for whatever reason have preferred to hold back information or opinions in the past are welcome to furnish them at any time.

Would anyone like to purchase on an "as is" basis any gold coin, ingot or bar with the name BLAKE & AGNELL upon it?

September 2000

KENNETH BRESSETT
P.O. Box 60145
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80960

Phone: (719) 579-8217 e-mail: kbressett@pcisys.net Fax: (719) 579-8012

December 1, 2000

Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society
6450 Cecil Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63105

Dear Eric,

You have asked that I read the article on Blake gold pieces and I am happy to do so. Unfortunately, I have no special knowledge of these pieces that could add substantially to what has been written. What I might offer are some comments on the thrust of the material and how it might influence a reader.

The article seems weak in that it is not a clear indictment of the suspected forgeries or forgers. This is a sensitive matter, of course, but the way this is written seems to call for a conclusion to be reached by the reader as if it could be based on a matter of opinion rather than fact.

This would be a stronger piece if it contained less of the writer's opinions, speculation, conclusions, accusations or humor. Having said that, I must back up and ask what is the intent of the article? It is great for entertaining reading but the matter is so serious that it should be presented straightforward as an indictment of the crime. Humor, while appreciated in anyone's writing, has no place here.

There is nothing of a technical nature that I can add to the numismatic accuracy of this article. I do ask that you make a distinction between the *Guide Book* as written by R. S. Yeoman and as edited by me after about 1963 or 1964.

I have added a few comments to some of the pages. These are being sent herewith along with a copy of a page from what I had written in 1998 concerning one man's opinion of owning and making fake gold bars.

I have also commented on an unusual situation concerning the recent publication of two articles on Blake & Co. written by Paul Gilkes and published in *Coin World* on June 7, 1999 and again on November 27, 2000. The recent article contains much of the same material used in the first, and seems like an extraordinary duplication. The timing and redundancy seem like an effort to bring additional support to the claim that these pieces are genuine (as stated in the articles).

It is also interesting to note how *Coin World* calls further attention to private gold items in its editorial and story coverage of the mysterious recent discovery of a third specimen of the Bowie $5.

I hope these comments are helpful. The article is factual, original and conclusive. The only real weakness is that it does not seem to have a focused thrust. It only suggests a conclusion rather than making a clear condemnation. Other than that, I loved it and can't wait to see it in print.

Peace,

Ken Bressett

Please find these

Adams "American Gold Coin Discoveries of 1909" Numismatist Feb 1910

Nothing ✓ Bennett "Private Issues of gold", AJN April 1892

Browne "Unrecorded Coinage", Numismatist June 1894

Ford ~~"Odds + Ends of U.S. Coinage", Numismatist May 1950~~

Greeng "United States Necessity Money," Numismatist Oct 1905

Nothing ✓ Hidden, "Trial Pieces" Numismatist April 1912 Cant find at this issue

Nothing ✓ Hudson, "Necessity Money" Num Scrapbook Mag. Dec 1962

Ringler ~~Nothing~~ ✓ Private Mint Strikes Coins, Ingots Num Scrapbook Nov 1973

Yeoman "Gold Bush Private Coinage", Whitman Num Journal Mar 1964

Stevens Ingots Coinage Mag Feb 1960.

Stevens Unofficial Gold Coinage Mag July 1974

Stack New Varieties of Mass + Calif Co Fun Dollar Gold Pieces, Num Review, March 1943

Subj: **Re: (no subject)**
Date: 03/20/2006 2:31:30 P.M. Central Standard Time
From: kbressett@pcisys.net
To: EricNumis@aol.com

Dear Eric:

Try as I may, I never seem to stay clear of these controversies. The piece I alluded to is, of course, the Bowie $5. I am convinced that it is fake, and believe that the truth will be published one of these days. In the meantime I must be cautious.

I have been trying to find things that I could recommend for the revised edition of your Early Paper Money book. I really have very little experience in this field, and do not feel confident enough to add anything to your masterful work. The values need to be brought up to date, but I would not rely too heavily on the prices that were seen in the Ford sale. Those records, like many of the coins in those sales, were somewhat influenced by nature of the auction. Much like the Garrett records, that in some cases still seem very high.

I have not yet analyzed the Ford material to see what might need to be added to you listings. I assume that you will be doing that, and with far greater knowledge of the subject than I will ever have. I will get back to you with any observations that might occur to me, but I doubt that I will come up with anything of importance.

All is well here. It is snowing today, despite this being the first day of spring.

Stay well, Ken

At 02:10 PM 3/20/2006 -0500, you wrote:

> Dear Ken:
> I see that you are in on some of the exchanges of thought as to the Ford and Franklin matters commented on in the current Esylum. I presume you have read the Rulau article in the current Numismatic News where Bowers is said to have changed his mind on reading Kleeberg's Online material. Rulau says in the article that the $20 1853 USAOG matter is not settled but he is apparently not aware of some published material.
> I see you mentioned a change you might make in the your book on a pioneer piece. You are up a tree on that one.
> The can of worms seems to be wide open again. My file of material
> is getting so big I do not think my concrete basement floor will be able to support the weight.
> My best. Eric

Kenneth Bressett
P.O. Box 60145

MEMORANDUM

This is the memo book
I used to take notes
of remarks of Ken
Panter when I
visited him at his
Arizona home in 1968.

Eric Severson

Copy made in
2009

PLACES VISITED

PLACES VISITED

Date

Place

Russell H. Berg, M.D.
Private Stud Courage of the United States. Product by U.S. Health Dist. Introduced about 1935
He practiced dentistry and forged the Moffat Law. Stamps 23 p/g Out 1 from Air Mail Envelope

Kagan's upper cabin was wrecked by engine.
Kagan, owner bootlegger from Detroit, Final harmony of 1950 AAA sale

Shulman was kept out of Egyptian pact by Roosevelt efforts.

Stephanelli worked for Stacks for a very short time

Ford worked for Stacks

Roosevelt-Kennedy were partners

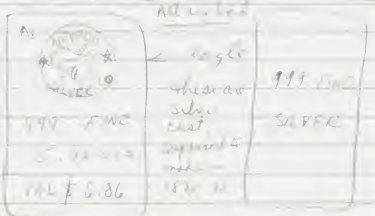
PLACES VISITED

Date

Place

[illegible]

[illegible]



There was a silver Trial Board 300 to 400 and Harry Truman was laughing about the poor design for the eagle. He called it the screaming fowl. Truman was in on making the bill for the eagle and Ford Reynolds about it

PLACES VISITED

Date

Place

There are four Templeton Reid dies of the #1C—
2 were in Painter collection +
were in nickel
Eagin had another not in gold
Mint collection has the fourth in gold

There are 4 varieties of
the #1G[00] Not Just Bar and only
one is good. (See Nums for 1940)
Stacks made up of bars + later
offered Painter one of the 4 pieces.
A drawing is illustrated in Plate VII in the Public Sale Catalogue of 1912 etc.

#5C Humbert Story with rays in reverse was made for Virgil Brand long ago as a joke. This was merely reengraving. It is identical otherwise to the normal piece Smith of Chicago had a son who moved to Tucson + ran a bar (he was an alcoholic). the son told Painter this story

PLACES VISITED

(169 + 175)

Date — the catalogue used by Smith

Place — Sun [illegible] 67 Clybourn Ave

Chicago (Cat. 1920) had his auction
a few months [illegible] the catalogue

Murrell has a second #5C [illegible]
Brand [illegible] from [illegible] transfer
Mint [illegible] 1933 [illegible] dies [illegible] Mint
[illegible]

Mint + Coin — 2 hand cuts
from different dies. Murrell did
[illegible] one or more, high scores
There was a coast [illegible]
[illegible] front

Reeding between [illegible] close
[illegible] to right
[illegible] to opposite
[illegible] by [illegible] the
[illegible] the [illegible] protrudes
[illegible] The [illegible]
[illegible] Adams illustrates the pattern
the dies must have gotten loose and

(4)

PLACES VISITED

Date

Place

The previous day's visit to Mr. Hall's #10 shows that the date employed to change the date from 1856 to 1860 had the 1860 before the date change. Evidently a punch from one of the previous dies of 1860 was utilized to make the 1856 die (#11) on page 13.

Chas. Yaker, Rec 1861 had a gold stick of Pencil with 7 Eleven front feed from the pattern illustrated p 86 in Mooney book on the Clark Yaker that.

Lead Pencil Rec owned by Wirt was made from a die at San Diego Foundation was produced but upon Count, how the fake was apply depart to depict the new die

PLACES VISITED

Date

Place

- Rec'd one gold Pencil #12 - 5 - with a Faraff selection Change your Pencil to one selected from #1, ... in response to ad

Fred Rec'd no Response, this which probably was for his phone

Clarke & Co Rec'd - fake - I Maxwell had one

Two pencils - this one Type 2, Maxwell had one - from Contact Rec

There is also a $3.00 + a $10.00 Pencil, they are both in the $5.00

PLACES VISITED

Date

Place

Manuel Mas. Jane Fong [illegible] with a lady attached. They are both dead.

V J & H assay office left by John Ford. the Clifford J & H [illegible] bed. Nevada City, 1857

All of these [illegible] on page 1 Clifford book - but the page has now [illegible]

Painter, Thanks all of the boys such as [illegible] Hunter & Burton [illegible]
Smith & Hunter [illegible]
Gillespie & Hunter [illegible]
Nagley & Co [illegible]
Cox bed. The Hunter & Burton [illegible] ground not purchased record [illegible] to Painter & Co Wells [illegible] maximum

PLACES VISITED

Date

Place

[illegible] Tompkins. Ford [illegible] Mark will [illegible] not [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] from Nagy. the [illegible] [illegible] Clifford book. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

D W Hall - [illegible]

Ford + Powell - [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] together and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

(6)

PLACES VISITED

Date

Place

Stevenson

Historical Marker

United States Colored Troops

Harrisonville, Mo. 4-1-

copy from Hist. Society

Division of Parks & Historic Sites
Frank Bell - Asst. Supervisor
Historical & Archeological Sites
Hyden, Ky. Surnan Trail & Ky
Dial 6 141
Pioneer Log Cabin
Pine Mountain State Park
Pineville, Ky.

Russell had a log cut of
door of U.S. Hosp. Office

PLACES VISITED

Date

Place

When Lucretia met with
Pioneer Log Committee the
year was not stated, only
Spring. Stuckey Bros. Cabin
Land, Inc. of Kentucky, [illegible]
Pineville Kentucky which has [illegible]
[illegible] and the Committee of the
Pine Mountain Settlement
School, Inc. [illegible]

Send for free copy of Pioneer
Architecture

Pioneer Log Cabin
[illegible] Ky. - Pine
Pineville Ky. - 1960's and
Pioneer Cabin - 1964

PLACES VISITED

Date

Place

PLACES VISITED

Date

PLACES VISITED

Date

Place

Well here goes an
Place to start for
Pioneers first he only drowned
one man so it is the fall
1852 ugly bird Wm Hollis

Harry Truman was a great
preacher. Plenty will a
great deal. Not found quite
three left Uncle Bill said
come the front. He did
most stop & burned them
with paper count but the
contents then doubt make
the marking they were sewn
up. The mouth of the sack
were still sealed. Many bags
were found slit. Then stole
to Salem dollars

PLACES VISITED

Date

Place

I had brought 7 [illegible] Army
[illegible] to Pioneer in
(Feb 1853) and soon [illegible] The
[illegible] Brooks [illegible]
[illegible] soon we [illegible]
[illegible] recent [illegible] We
[illegible] to try them. The place
[illegible] from the [illegible]
that they were [illegible]
made many [illegible]
and [illegible]

The [illegible] were
[illegible] & [illegible]
[illegible] by [illegible] the [illegible]
[illegible] for [illegible] they [illegible]
[illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] left
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] every [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] other.

MR. KENYON V. PAINTER, who energetically pursued the evasive Pioneer Coins for more than a decade.

Mr. Painter was born in Cleveland, Ohio, served four years in the Air Force during World War II. From New York City, where he acquired his business training, Mr. Painter moved west, to Phoenix, Arizona in 1952. His move west, his interest in the land and his keen appreciation of history seemed to dictate the vocation—and avocation—into which Mr. Painter would throw his energies. He has successfully operated his interest in Real Estate and in Coin Collecting as well.

The romance of the Pioneer Coinage, added to the challenge which the collecting of such a series offered, attracted Mr. Painter to these coins and he feels that his efforts have been amply rewarded.

December 30, 1952

Mr. Walter Breen
Box 193
New York 36, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Breen:

I was very pleased to receive your letter of Christmas Day and, while I have not read it nor checked it with the book, I hasten to acknowledge it and express my thanks. You may be very sure that any corrections will be made in the next edition, and if you wish to have another book which you can use for noting down actual revisions in the proper places, I would be glad to send one.

When I saw Abe Kosoff in California about a month ago, he explained to me about the Kellogg-Hewston Ingot and said that it was supposed to have been 1860.

Again thanking you for your trouble and assuring you that I will get in touch with you on any matters not clear, I remain

Very truly yours,

WHITMAN PUBLISHING COMPANY

R. S. Yeoman

RSY/mj

New Netherlands Coin Co., Inc.

SUITE 401
1 WEST 47TH STREET
NEW YORK 36, N. Y.

PHONES PLAZA 7-5245-6

August 31, 1953

Mr. Art Kagin
400 Royal Union Bldg.
Des Moines 9, Iowa

Dear Art:

In reference to Blake & Agnell who conducted a gold-smelting and assaying plant at 52 "J" St., between 2nd and 3rd, in Sacramento, we have obtained considerable information concerning their operations.

From what we can now ascertain, the piece that you have was an odd denomination of a regular issue $25 gold piece. Prior to 1855, Blake & Agnell issued "Assay-Bars" which are not to be confused with "Monetary-Ingots". The former were strictly conversion pieces made for the convenience of miners and others purely as a means of converting dust into a convenient form. They almost always are in an odd denomination and of variable fineness. They do not involve precision die work as does the 1855 $25 gold piece and the obverse of your variant.

We have also found out that the same firm struck coin patterns, in gold and silver, for a $50 gold piece in the same year. This item allegedly shows upon the obverse a coining press, and is a very close imitation, in many respects, of the Augustus Humbert issues. From December 29, 1855, Blake & Agnell were known as Blake & Co., under which auspices they struck a $20 pattern, in both brass and copper, resembling the regular U.S. Gold Double Eagle. This coin was dated 1856, and it is the natural conclusion of Blakes activity as a private coiner.

All this information will be consolidated and expanded, and will be published in considerable detail, prior to the appearance of any of the pieces, in the Standard Catalog.

Please either bring the Blake & Agnell Ingot with you or send it to the A.N.S., c/o Mr. William Clark. If you follow the latter course please advise me.

In reference to the Standard Catalog, we would like to discuss the situation with you, and in view of the fact that our 41st sale is on September 26th, suggest that you kill two birds with one stone and visit New York at that time.

Very best personal regards in which CMI joins.

Sincerely,

John J. Ford, Jr.

JJF:dn

AN INQUIRY INTO THE AUTHENTICITY OF A HOARD OF
$20 UNITED STATES ASSAY OFFICE GOLD PIECES

Since I have been asked to make a statement of a technical numismatic nature I believe that a brief summary of my background is advisable. I have continuously collected and studied coins and paper money as a hobby for 45 years, primarily in the American field. I have steadily undertaken research and writing in the field beginning over 20 years ago and have assisted others in similar activity. In 1958 I was instrumental in the organization of a non-profit numismatic education society bearing my name to aid in numismatic research, writing, and exhibition on a broader scale and I am representing this Society in making this statement. In the course of my work for this Society and prior thereto I have studied counterfeits, reproductions, imitations, forgeries, alterations and fantasies. Many of my studies in this field have been published, such as:

The Secret of the Good Samaritan Shilling
The Fantastic 1804 Dollar
Counterfeit Continental Currency Goes to War
A recently discovered Coin Solves a Vermont Numismatic Enigma
Diagnosing the Zerbe 1804 and 1805 Dollars
An Oak Tree Shilling Forgery Appears
A Snake Breeds a St.Patrick Farthing
Auctori Plebis - But Without Authority
An Elephant Token Never Forgets - Forgery

Many coins have been submitted to the Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society for an opinion as to their genuineness and such opinions have been given by me on its behalf. I have often lectured on false coins. I serve as a member of the Council of the American Numismatic Society and have been a member of the A.N.A. for over 31 years.

At the 1964 American Numismatic Association Convention at Cleveland I was asked by Dr.James O. Sloss to participate in the determination as to whether certain $20 U.S.Assay Office Gold

pieces were genuine and was shown one of the questioned pieces at that time. I was told that George J. Fuld, Abe Kosoff, and John Pittman would also be asked to be members of the study group. I explained that the education society would be glad to participate if the coins were made available for study and subsequently much work was done on the subject. While I have discussed certain facts and theories with members of the study group and with a few people from whom I sought further data, neither I nor the education society have heretofore expressed any specific opinion or revealed any opinion of other members of the study group. Due to illness, a long delay in the study resulted and the group has not formulated a joint opinion. I am satisfied that at this time there is no objection by any member of the study group to a free expression of findings and opinions by any of its members. While I have received requests for an opinion on the matter on many prior occasions, I felt that it was untimely and ill-advised to give an opinion for two reasons: first, I felt that everyone in the study group was entitled to sufficient time to exhaust all opportunities to learn additional facts, and second, I felt that more than a reasonable time should elapse after the study group was known to be at work in case any voluntary disclosures were to be made. I am aware that there has heretofore been considerable comment about $20 USAOG pieces and related matters and therefore feel that it is fortunate an impartial hearing on the matter has been arranged. Because the inquiry primarily involves coins themselves I am avoiding the use of names of individuals to the extent that a full disclosure of facts will not be adversely affected. There are many individuals whose cooperation has been exemplary and whose desire to seek the truth was in the highest tradition of numismatic scholarship.

The importance of a correct determination of the question cannot be underestimated, since it relates not only to the Garland coin under review and to other numismatic items in the hands of collectors and dealers but to the future of numismatics. Any opinion expressed must be based upon certainty, and for that reason facts relating to inconclusive findings or speculation as to facts will be omitted unless they become more relevant in the course of other developments or are reasonably requested.

Our findings and conclusions are as follows:

In the July, 1963 NUMISMATIST (p.997) there is an advertisement seeking among other things to buy, a $20 U.S.Assay Office piece in "Gem Proof Mirror Surface Condition" and the ad indicated that theretofore one had been seen by the advertiser. A letter was published in answer thereto in the August, 1963 NUMISMATIST (p.1090) offering information concerning coins of that type dated 1853 with a fineness of 900. The letter stated that seven gem proofs "were obtained from the direct descendant of an associate of August Humbert " and that five were for sale in the Spring of 1958. The Garland specimen can be traced back to one such sale. The weights of the seven pieces were given as ranging from 514.5 to 518.25 grains. The weight and the alloy were said to be written on old linen handkerchiefs in which the coins were wrapped but which were not available. The letter states that since 1958 other "semi-proof or first-strike specimens" were obtained from "living relatives and friends of the gentleman with whom we first did business." The number of the semi-proof or first strike coins was not stated, nor was it stated whether the "gentleman" who was the original source of the coins was then dead or alive. The identification of the source is not further clarified and that source will be referred to in this statement as the "Humbert Associate Source."

The proofs were stated in that letter to be from highly polished dies and planchets and an opinion was given that the gem proofs apparently were patterns made to test copper alloy combinations. All proofs were said to be from the same pair of dies and it was pointed out that the reverse die is distinguished by a projection on the right upper of N in UNITED. The letter mentioned that the Seavey (1864), Bell (1944) and Farouk (1954) sales each contained a proof $20 USAOG 900 fine and that the Red Book illustrated a proof with a lump on the reverse between TE of UNITED.

There was a proof-like 1853 USAOG $20 sold as Lot 3338 at the ANA 1964 Convention Sale which was said to have been bought as a true proof and was given an estimated value of $4500. The cataloguer said that he had previously bought another specimen as a proof, which he had sold and which was later offered at $6500. Both the auctioned coin and the cataloguer's former coin were said to have come to light in a discovery. The cataloguer stated that neither were proofs. That cataloguer's former coin is the coin now owned by Paul Garland.

Other recent public offerings of choice $20 USAOG pieces which have come to my attention are a superb gem proof offered for $4500 in the October, 1964 NUMISMATIC SCRAPBOOK MAGAZINE (p.2819), a brilliant uncirculated specimen as Lot 1702 in the April 30,1965 Paramount Sale, and a gem proof offered for $1200, on page 1122 of the May, 1966 NUMISMATIC SCRAPBOOK MAGAZINE .

In the Blue Ridge Coin News for November, 1964 Paul Garland informed its readers that a coin for which he had paid $3300 was false. He was referring to his $20 1853 USAOG because he specifically named the members of the study group which was then at work on the matter.

In the 1966 Whitman Red Book the listing of the $20 1853 USAOG 900 fine (p.225) was accompanied by the comment, "Beware of Spurious specimens in Proof condition." This statement was inserted in the 1966 Red Book on the recommendation of a panel of 13 named advisors (p.213) on U.S.Territorial Gold, all of whom were informed of the proposed statement before its insertion and no objection to it was then raised. The statement, however, was removed from the 1967 edition of the Red Book.

Of the type of coin under study I have had the opportunity to examine four glittering superb pieces from the Humbert Associate Source (#5, 7, 14 and 16), including the Garland piece, one normally appearing proof (#12), two brilliant uncirculated pieces (#6 and 15), a large group of circulated pieces ranging from very good to about uncirculated condition, and seven lead items containing some of the same designs, (six being from the Humbert Associate Source). There apparently is in existence a piece in silver which is held along with two additional glittering pieces in gold, all three from the Humbert Associate Source.

On November 17, 1964 some USAOG examples were turned over to the United States Secret Service for authentication purposes. The Secret Service sought the legal opinion of the General Counsel of the Treasury Department as to whether the Secret Service had authority to investigate the matter. A ruling was received that the United States Assay Office coins were not obligations of the United States government and the Secret Service therefore declined to investigate the matter.

Enlarged photographs of 25 coins which were extensively studied are on hand and these will be referred to by number and their characteristics described.

Coins #1 and 10 are the variety with 884 THOUS above the eagle on the obverse. In making the dies for 900 fine pieces the 900 was

punched over the 884 in the die and evidence of such overpunching is readily noticed on every 900 fine gold coin.

Coins #1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 19 were owned by museums or private collections long prior to 1958. The date of acquisition by the owners of #17 and 18 is not available. The ownership of #5, 6, 7, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 came about during or after 1958.

Coins # 1 through 19 are gold and coins #20 through 25 are lead. The lead pieces will be separately commented upon, primarily because they have substantially different obverse designs.

Coins #5, 7, 14 and 16 are glittering pieces, far shinier than normal proofs of the period and not as mirror-like. Coins which have been cleaned or polished subsequent to striking are sometimes found with similar patina, but original strikings of United States coins are not. This makes it appear that an attempt has been made to produce an artificial proof surface rather than that the coins are normal proofs.

Coins #15 and 16 are double struck, the former on both sides and the latter on the reverse, making visibility of some details difficult.

Coins #1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18 and 19 have a rice shaped raised lump under the right arm of the T of UNITED on the reverse while #5, 7 and 16 do not. This lump was caused by an accidental flaking or disintegration from crystallization in a small part of the field of the reverse die and was not produced voluntarily. It probably occurred during the abrupt temperature drop in hardening the steel die by immersion in liquid when heated.

Coins #5, 6, 7, 14 and 16 have an identical raised diagonal line under the right corner of the right base of the second A in AMERICA on the obverse. This was caused by a die scratch and this therefore shows that #6 which is not of the glittering type has the same obverse die as the glittering pieces.

Coins #5, 6, 7, 14 and 16 have a straight dent rising to the right across the upper part of the I in UNITED on the obverse. This dent is identical on all those coins and therefore came from the die and not from handling the coins. The dent is not found on other coins. Since #5, 7, 14 and 16 are glittering pieces from the Humbert Associate Source it is clear that the same obverse die was used for the #6 and therefore it is among the "first strike" or "semi proof" pieces mentioned as being from the same source.

Coins #5, 7 and 16 have a raised horizontal projection from the right side of the upright of N in UNITED on the reverse but no other pieces do. Since #6 and 14 have the same obverse die as these coins, this shows either a different reverse die was used or there was a change in the condition of the reverse die. The horizontal projection being raised on coins#5, 7 and 16 was a depression in the die and therefore coins #6 and #14 would have to be struck before #5, 7 and 16 if all of them were coined from the same pair of dies.

Coins #6, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17 and 18 have a heavy reverse die break from the first A and S in ASSAY to L of GOLD to the second C of FRANCISCO and toward the 8 in the date. However, coins #5, 7 and 16 show slight evidence of the identical reverse die break because they have a raised spur projecting angularly downward and to the right from the right end of the right base of the first A in ASSAY. Therefore the reverses of coins #5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 would logically have to be from the same die as identical die breaks cannot occur on different dies. This reverse die observation coupled with the above obverse die observations leads to the conclusion that all of the glittering proofs (#5, 7, 14 and 16) were struck from the same pair of dies and that #6 was likewise struck with those identical dies.

Coins #5, 6, 7, 14, 15 and 16 have 170 reeds or ridges on their edge whereas all other coins examined have 162 reeds. This means that a different collar was used in striking the 170 reed pieces than was used for the others because in 1853,as it is at present, the reed impression was produced by the lateral expansion of the planchet into the collar when the dies struck the planchet. The reeds on the 170 reed pieces have sharply defined ridges, and any two of those pieces placed side by side interlock with and roll on one another just as gear teeth do.

Coin #6 shows under magnification that the right and bottom portions of the field on the obverse are completely filled with a large number of sweeping curved lines. These lines are very close together and are separated by identical distances. These lines are not arcs formed from the same center point but are a part of a perfectly uniform spiral or helix with the center point of the coin as a center. This design is so perfect that it had to be produced on a lathe and could not be cut by a skilled hand in 1853 or now. A powerized lathe turning circular material at a constant speed and equipped with a tool mounted on an automatic cross feed can cut such a design. The tool moves vertically to the axis of rotation and its automatic forward progress produces a helical tool mark in smoothing off the end of the material. This helical tool mark is not found on any other coin examined and I am unaware of such a marking on any other coin of any type. This marking could appear on a coin either from it being on a planchet before striking or on the die. Since the identical obverse die used to strike #6 is also used at least on #5, 7, 14 and 16, such a helical pattern should also be seen on those other coins if it were in the die. No such design can be seen on the other coins and thus the helical tool marks were on coin #6 planchet before striking. This proves that the planchet was not made in the ordinary manner by drawing a

sheet of metal to proper thickness and punching out planchets as was the normal process in 1853 and today. The planchet therefore was produced by a lathe in a most abnormal manner. In 1853 the automatic cross cut device was not available on lathes in America.

Only coins #2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 were tested by X ray diffraction and the photographic prints have been interpreted to show that the planchets for coins #5 and 7 were cast rather than drawn while the others were not cast. The photographic results show a much greater dispersion of the rays passing through #5 and 7. The fact that planchets for #5 and 7 are not rolled and drawn and differ from #6 which was machined adds further to the fact that abnormal planchet production occurred in these instances.

In 1853 multiple dies could be made from a common hub and they would be difficult to distinguish unless there was some detail such as a scratch, surface defect or die break which resulted. Any such defect would appear on each coin struck from the die bearing the defect unless the defect occurred in the course of striking and then all coins thereafter struck from it would bear the defect and those struck before would not. A die break may be progressive and would only increase in size as coins were struck. Such defects appear raised on the coin and are depressions on the die surface. They cannot be cut away or removed from the die.

When dents appear on a coin this is the result of contact with other coins or bumps from use. The identical dents cannot therefore appear on several different coins. Gold coins in particular are soft and easily subject to denting.

There are many dents found on USAOG coins. Yet coins #5, 6, 7, 14, 15 and 16 have a large group of identical dents particularly on the frame line surrounding the text on the reverse. Since such dents cannot have arisen separately on each coin, they must therefore have been produced from a die with a surface shape to form

such dents. These dents must be raised portions in the die to produce depressions in the coins. The largest and most conspicuous of these dents on the frame line of the reverse of coins #5, 6, 7, 14, 15 and 16 begins under the right tip of the base of F in CALIFORNIA and slopes down to the right almost as far as a point below the right end of the top horizontal member of that F. This dent appears on no other coins examined. Since #5, 7 and 16 do not have the fully developed die break through the letters and #6, 14 and 15 do have the extended die break through the letters there are Humbert Associate Source coins with and without the die break, but all bearing the identical frame line dent described. This dent was therefore in the die before the die break fully developed. As heretofore pointed out coins #9, 13, 15, 17 and 18 have the die break fully developed but do not have the large dent. This presents an impossible situation where some coins with the identical reverse die break definitely have and some do not have the large dent which originated from the identical die from which all coins with the developed die break would have to be struck.

This same logic applies to the raised horizontal line on the right side of N of UNITED on the reverse of coins #5, 7 and 14. This was an indentation in the die before the die break fully developed and cannot disappear after the die break became further developed as it does on coins #6, 15 and 16.

This is conclusive evidence that the coins from the Humbert Associate Source were not struck from original dies made to strike the 1853 USAOG coinage. If the dies were not original 1853 dies they must be false dies. If they are false dies and contained a die break identical to the die break found on many pedigreed coins such as #9 and 13 and on coins illustrated in many old sale catalogues, then the false dies must have been produced from a coin with a fully developed die break on the reverse.

Lead pieces #20 through 25 come from the Humbert Associate Source. Only #20 has an obverse and reverse similar to the other pieces from the same source, but the fineness number has been

scraped out of the obverse. Coins #21, 22 and 23 have the same reverse but a completely different obverse bearing the legend A HUMBERT U.S.ASSAYER. Coins #24 and #25 have the same obverse as the gold pieces except that the figure 50 is in place of the denomination TWENTY. Coins #21, 22, 23 and 24 have a reverse similar to the normal reverse of the coins under consideration. These lead obverses all have the lump under the T of UNITED. They all have the identical dent in the frame line under the F of CALIFORNIA just as the other Humbert Associate/Source coins do. They all have a dio break through the letters just as #6, 14 and 15 of the same source do. This therefore is a strange set of trial pieces since the reverse die had already been used for production and the die had been extensively cracked before the lead trials were made. Comparing this to another lead trial of a $20 USAOG reverse which has been in a museum for about fifty years it is noted that the latter does not have the dent in the frame line and does not have the die break found on the Humbert Associate Source lead trials. Thus the lead pieces also fit in with the conclusion that false dies were used for the Humbert Associate Source examples.

The question arises as to how such devilment can be accomplished. A highly skilled artisan using sophisticated technical equipment can produce a steel die or steel hub from a coin. First a wax, latex or plastic mold can be made from each side of the coin. The mold can then be dipped in a ceramic slurry, withdrawn for drying, and redipped until a ceramic deposit has been built up to adequate thickness. It can then be burned in a furnace and the wax, latex or plastic mold volatilizes leaving a hard ceramic positive identical to one side of the coin. Molten steel or other hard metal can then be centrifically cast into the ceramic positive producing a steel die. There are many possible variations in this technique as it is fundamentally nothing more than precision casting of a die from a

small object, a process which in the last ten years has been perfected. Such casting could not be done well until modern times because electrotyping, sand casting and plaster casting even with centrifugal procedures were not perfect enough or strong enough to permit the creation of a superbly accurate steel die. The shrinkage of steel in the casting produces a slight size differential which is unnoticeable unless measured by precision instrumentation. If the edge of the coin is reeded a separate collar die must also be produced and an automatic gear hobbing or broaching machine can readily cut a shape needed to form it. Coins can then be struck using the two dies and a collar in a press. The product can be struck in any desired metal, in any desired thickness and in various obverse and reverse die combinations. Reproductions as well as fantasies can be readily coined. To make glittering coins from these dies the field can be polished easily because the design is recessed in the die and then polished or unpolished planchets may be used depending on the sheen required.

If alterations in the date, letters, etc. are sought the steel die can be pressed into soft steel to produce a steel hub. In this hub the lettering, die breaks and dents project and therefore can be smoothed off with a tiny mechanical polisher so that a flat field can result where a raised portion once was. The hub can then be hardened, transferred in its changed form to a die. The new die can then be hardened and used in its then state or the die may have different letters or a different denomination into it so that it can create unknown coins.

All of the foregoing requires specialized skill and tedious work. Let us apply these procedures to the production of the dies used in the $20 USAOG pieces from the Humbert Associate Source. The extensive reverse die break and the lump under T in UNITED which were on the original genuine $20 coin used to make the mold

for the false dies appeared on the first of the reproductions. Then a steel hub was made from the reverse die and the die break and lump polished off to a great extent, except for the trace of the die break next to the first A in ASSAY. The nicks on the original coin were transferred to the false die and were not noticed but were too difficult to remove even if they had been.

As to the 50 D appearing on the lead pieces a steel obverse hub was made from the steel obverse die and TWENTY (raised off the field in this state) was polished off, a new die made by transfer and the figure 50 punched into the new die to change the denomination. The D for DOLLARS was left high and dry in the same position it was when the die was a false $20 die. Then the lead impressions (#24 and 25) were struck with this varient.

The maker of the reproductions apparently had trouble. He seemed not to have metal drawing equipment available and determined to make his planchets by other means. He seems to have tried casting the planchets one at a time and to have tried cutting the planchets on a modern lathe with an automatic cross cut mechanism. He might have polished the planchets on a lathe one at a time when he wanted full glitter. In the course of production of the coins the maker accidentally scratched his obverse die slightly under the last A of AMERICA and nicked the reverse die slightly next to the N in UNITED on the reverse leaving these tell-tale marks. Because the coins with a fully developed die break came first (#6 and 14) and those without most of that die break (#5, 7, 15 and 16) followed, the reversed order of the appearance of the scratch on the N in UNITED is clarified.

But in spite of all the care and precision of the maker he must have failed to count the reeds on the collar of the original coin and cut a collar in a broaching machine with 170 instead of 162 reeds in it. How many numismatists have ever had the patience to count the reeds on the edge of a coin. Beginning now it appears that such a counting practice must be undertaken as the surest method

to diagnose a $20 USAOG reproduction. The dent under the F of CALIFORNIA and the remaining die break evidence on the productions might be obscured as can the raised defect under the last A of AMERICA. The number of reeds cannot be changed but new strikings can be prepared by using the false dies with a remade collar. Now that the reproductions are identified there are many other means of distinguishing them from originals, but comparisons with genuine pieces or highly enlarged photographs is not practical for most numismatists. The quantity of Humbert Associate Source coins is not known and caution is required for the future.

For the reasons set out above we conclude that the Garland coin, being #5, and being from the Humbert Associate Source is not genuine and is made with false dies and hubs cast from a genuine coin and modified slightly before use in mintage.

Somewhere there is a beautiful genuine $20 U.S.Assay piece 900 fine which has the obverse dents and the reverse dents identical to those found on the coins from the Humbert Associate Source. It has the extended die break on the reverse. It has the lump under the T of UNITED. It is the piece from which the molds and dies were made to strike the Humbert Associate Source coins.

The Humbert Associate Source has not been alone in the manufacture of reproductions and fantasies as such activities have been and are now going on. Dangerous modern forgeries and fantasies will undermine numismatic enthusiasm and collapse numismatic values of scarce and rare pieces if a thorough investigation into the situation is not undertaken and a solution found. The current laws and the enforcement of law are not adequate to cope with the menace, as the public's primary interest in this field is and should be in the suppression of the counterfeiting of circulating money. Every lawful pressure should be used by numismatists and their organizations to require that all coins, dies, hubs, punches, bars,

trials, molds and stampings emanating from the Humbert Associate Source be turned in to the A.N.A., the A.N.S., or other permanent impartial organizations for permanent mutilation after settlement by sellers of any proper refunds to purchasers. It would be injurious to numismatics to have such reproductions available for redistribution or the tools available for other reproductions to be made. Quantities of high quality reproductions of Byzantine gold, Roman gold, United States gold and other coins of recent origin must be drastically dealt with as well. Numismatics is at the crossroads, and the tragedy which can result if the manufacture, distribution and retention of superb reproductions and fantasies are not crushed is awesome.

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By Eric P. Newman

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